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ABSTRACT

Written to help Hispanics understand the electoral process more thoroughly and to encourage them to participate more actively in the political arena, this manual begins by describing the present status of the Hispanic electorate and then explains how laws are made, how Hispanics can influence legislation, and how to organize a voter registration drive. The section focusing on the Hispanic electorate points out that as the country's fastest growing population group Hispanics are accepted and courted as a significant political force. Discussion of problems includes noncitizen status of many Hispanics, poor voter turnout, low socioeconomic status, and non-registration. Analysis of Hispanic participation in the 1984 presidential election looks at presidential preference by ethnic group, education, income, and age. Opinions of different Hispanic groups pertaining to domestic budget cuts, nuclear freeze, amnesty, aid to El Salvador, military aid to the Contras, and other issues of interest to the Hispanic community are also examined. The section on laws provides a general description of both Houses of Congress and the legislative process followed by specific suggestions for influencing legislation. The final section of the handbook explains the steps to follow in order to develop and implement a Hispanic voter registration drive. (JHZ)

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Political Education Manual

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January, 1986

Democracy is not a spectator sport.

That single sentence sums up the Philip Morris philosophy toward the electoral process and every American's part in it. As Americans, we are guaranteed the right to participate in the political process. We can run for office, we can campaign for candidates, we can express our positions to our elected representatives, we can vote. Nowhere else in the world is each individual so empowered. Not to participate in this process is to waste democracy's most precious gift.

Many critical issues face Americans today. All of them affect Hispanic Americans in some way. Questions ranging from how you live and work to such crucial issues as education, immigration, housing, and jobs are, in the final analysis, decided when you step into the voting booth to send people to local, state, or federal office.

Being a participant in a democracy, not just a spectator, means that you want to elect people who will look after your interests, preserve your freedoms, and make sure that government provides the services you require. Your participation ensures that government keeps you in mind when it makes new laws.

Hispanics are America's fastest-growing minority. The only way to be sure you are represented in proportion to your numbers is to learn the electoral process, then get out and vote.

On behalf of the people of Philip Morris, I congratulate LULAC on the excellent job it has done in compiling and producing this political education manual.

Sincerely,

Frank E. Resnik

Frank E. Resnik
President
Philip Morris U.S.A.

FORWARD

The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is this nation's oldest and largest Hispanic organization, with councils in forty states. Founded in 1929 in Corpus Christi, Texas, LULAC's central concerns are for full social, political, economic, and educational rights for Hispanics. To realize these goals, it is essential that Hispanics exercise their right to vote. The first step that must be taken, then, is to register to vote. It is precisely for this reason that we have written this political education manual.

The purpose of this manual is to help Hispanics understand the electoral process more thoroughly and to encourage them to participate more actively in the political arena. In pursuing this goal, the LULAC political education manual provides information on the present status of the Hispanic electorate and explains how laws are made, how Hispanics can influence legislation, and how voter registration drives are organized. The manual also provides information on how and where to register to vote in each state.

LULAC thanks Philip Morris USA and Maria Elena Herrera for their generous contribution which made this project possible and which will benefit the Hispanic community for many years to come. We sincerely hope that the effective use of this manual will facilitate our community's efforts to improve our economic, social, and political status in this nation. A full understanding of the political and electoral processes, as well as the ability to put this understanding into practice, is essential if we are to accomplish these goals.

As the 1980's were beginning, some in the private sector proclaimed this decade to be the "Decade of the Hispanics", bringing great expectations and hopes to our community. Some predicted that Hispanics would gain great political power and would rise to new heights in our quest for equality. During the first four years of this decade, however, none of these great expectations have been realized. While Hispanics, such as the mayors of Denver, San Antonio, and Miami; the Governor of New Mexico; and the five new Hispanic members of the U.S. House of Representatives; have been elected to major political positions, the condition of Hispanics in general has not improved; sadly, in many cases, it has worsened.

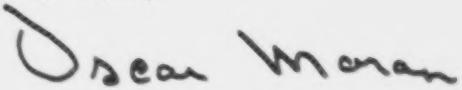
In 1983, a staggering 29.9 percent of the total Hispanic population was living in poverty, and the unemployment rate for Hispanics reached an all time high of 15.3 percent. While the poverty and unemployment rates for Hispanics have decreased slightly since then, the educational status of Hispanics remains dismal. Our national high school drop-out rate is approximately 50 percent, and Hispanic children in public schools are more segregated than the children of any other population group. If we equate education with prosperity, then Hispanics face a past, present, and future in

which a great majority of our community will continue to live outside the mainstream of U.S. society

If anything, these developments serve to underscore the need for Hispanics to do much more in order to fulfill our **own** expectations — not those created by the advertising cliche "Decade of the Hispanics". The above facts are not pessimistic exaggerations; they are simply the hard realities we must confront and overcome. We do not believe, as some do, that ignoring the ugly side of reality will make it disappear. Rather, we believe that becoming fully cognizant of our community's plight is the first step towards acting effectively to overcome these problems. LULAC believes that only through our own hard work and through our own initiatives in the political arena, can Hispanics improve our condition in the U.S. society. This will require discipline and a thorough knowledge of the political process. It implies that we must approach matters not as Democrats or as Republicans, but as Hispanics concerned about the interests of our people. We must never forget that change begins with us, as individuals and as a community. Let us change and improve our conditions by politically educating ourselves about the issues and political processes which to such a great extent determine our situation today.

LULAC would like to acknowledge the great vision and commitment of our founding fathers and of all the National Presidents that have followed them. Lastly, thanks to Miguel Diaz, Leah Carroll, Mary Carol Combs, and the rest of the LULAC National Office staff for their hard work in developing this manual.

Sinceramente,



Oscar Moran
National President

THE HISPANIC ELECTORATE

Since the Presidential elections of 1980, Hispanics have been courted in local, state, and national political campaigns as never before. There are a number of explanations for this new interest in Hispanic participation in the electoral process which we, as Hispanics, should carefully examine as we strive to gain political power.

In the first place, Hispanics are accepted as a significant political force and as such are courted because we represent a growing electoral block. Hispanics are the fastest growing population group in this country. Between 1970 and 1980, the number of Hispanic Americans increased by 61 percent; the non-Hispanic population increased by only 9 percent.

The Bureau of the Census estimated that there were 14.6 million Hispanics in the U.S. in 1980. If we add to this figure the number of foreign nationals of Hispanic origin currently residing in the United States, it is estimated that there are over twenty million Hispanics in this country. While some allowance must be made for the improved census enumeration of Hispanics, most of the rapid Hispanic population increase is due to the high birth rate of Hispanics and to increased immigration.

The electoral potential of Hispanic Americans has augmented even more rapidly than their numbers. During the 1970's, while the total number of Hispanics increased by 42 percent, from 4.5 percent to 6.4 percent of the population, the number of voting age Hispanics increased by 77 percent. Thus, the key to our electoral power lies in our willingness and capability to register and vote.

Hispanics are also considered a significant political force because our communities are concentrated in key states. Eighty-five percent of all voting age Hispanics live in only nine states. These same nine states, listed below, control a total of 193 electoral votes — 71 percent of the votes needed to win the presidency. These nine states are the following:

State	1980 Hispanic Population	Electoral Votes
California	4,544,331	47
Texas	2,985,824	29
New York	1,659,300	36
Florida	858,158	21
Illinois	635,602	24
New Jersey	491,883	16
New Mexico	477,222	5
Arizona	440,701	7
Colorado	339,717	8

(Source: Cary Davis, Carl Haub, and Joanne Willete, "U.S. Hispanics: Changing the Face of America", Population Bulletin)

If only the Hispanic electorate voted actively and in an organized fashion in these nine states, our political influence nationwide could be multiplied many times over.

A third factor which has strengthened the Hispanic electorate is its growing political activism. Through the initiatives of Hispanic groups such as LULAC, the Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project, the Midwest Voter Registration and Education Project, and the National Puerto Rican/Hispanic Voter Participation Project, Hispanics are registering now more than at any other time in the past. Hispanic activism has increased both the number of registered Hispanic voters and to some extent the political awareness of our community. This, together with the effective use of the Voting Rights Act by such legal groups as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) to dismantle many discriminatory election procedures and practices, has helped increase the number of Hispanic elected officials and the number of non-Hispanic elected officials sensitive and responsive to Hispanic interests. Nevertheless, Hispanics have a long way to go before we achieve our full electoral potential. In the following pages, some of the factors that impede our community's full electoral empowerment will be examined.

PROBLEMS OF THE HISPANIC ELECTORATE

According to the Bureau of the Census, only 45.4 percent of Hispanics living in the United States were eligible to vote in 1980, compared to 69.3 percent of the total population. The low eligibility rate of Hispanics can be explained by a number of factors.

The first factor is citizenship. It has been estimated by the Bureau of the Census that 16.0 percent of U.S. Hispanics of all ages, and 26 percent of Hispanic adults were not citizens, and thus were not eligible to vote.

Another important factor that affects the eligibility of Hispanics to vote is that of age. Whereas only 27.6 percent of Americans in general were under 18 years of age in 1980, 34.6 percent of Hispanics were in this age bracket. Thus, the full voting potential of the Hispanic community has yet to be felt and will be realized over the next ten years. In the process, as the Hispanic community grows and ages, so will its voting potential, although it is likely that the Hispanic population, because of its higher birth rate, will continue to have a younger average age than other population groups in the United States.

The fact remains, however, that even among those Hispanics eligible to vote, the voting turnout is poor. In 1980 only one third of all Hispanics eligible to vote actually voted. For those Hispanics who are over 18 years of age and are U.S. citizens, electoral participation has been hampered by a number of other factors. The lack of effective registration drives aimed at young Hispanic Americans has contributed to low registration and voter turnout. Because of the linguistic and cultural differences of the Hispanic

community, the efforts of some Non-Hispanic groups to register Hispanics, have been unfruitful. In 1980, only one-half of all eligible Hispanic voters were registered, compared to two-thirds of all U.S. voters. Hispanics have been quite successful and have become more numerous, taking the first step towards rectifying this situation of low registration.

There are also socio-economic factors which affect Hispanic electoral participation. As noted in a study by the Hispanic Policy Development Project, which appeared in the **Hispanic Almanac**, "Hispanics with a college degree are almost twice as likely to register and vote as those who have not completed high school; Hispanic professionals are almost twice as likely to go to the polls as blue collar workers; and persons earning at least $25,000 a year are twice as likely to vote as persons making less than $5,000." In 1980, the median income for Hispanics was $16,000, and the high school drop-out rate was fifty percent — a far cry from the above-mentioned conditions for active political participation. Undoubtedly, Hispanics would participate more actively in our electoral system if our community's educational and economic status improved, yet this improvement would come much more rapidly if Hispanics had more political clout. Our political empowerment must go hand in hand with our improved economic and educational status, for each one is the pre-condition for the other.

The gender issue has also affected Hispanic electoral participation. For example, Hispanic women have tended not to participate in electoral politics as much as Hispanic men have. During the 1970's, the Hispanic male registration rate remained five points higher than that of Hispanic females. Nevertheless, this Hispanic registration gender gap has closed almost entirely during the 1980's, due to the advances made by Hispanic women and to voter registration drives sensitive to this gap.

Younger and older Hispanics have also been more reluctant to register than middle-aged Hispanics. Bureau of the Census studies have shown that the difference in voter turnout between young and middle-aged registered Hispanic voters is about 20 points. The low voter participation of Hispanic elderly may be explained by their lack of English language capability and by the greater inconvenience, due to physical handicaps, that they face in the acts of registering and voting.

In conclusion, the major problem facing Hispanic citizens of the United States who are 18 years of age and over is that of non-registration, for as the Hispanic Almanac has stated, once Hispanics are registered, they are just as likely to vote as the rest of the population. Disregarding that large percentage of our population unable to register because of their age or citizenship status, the main obstacle impeding our full electoral participation is the low educational and socioeconomic status of our community, a status which must be improved by increasing our political power. The political development of our community will facilitate the solution of those socio-economic problems that face us and rob us of our full potential.

CONCLUSION

Presently, there are thirteen Hispanic voting members in Congress. If Hispanic representation were proportional to our numbers in the population, there would be thirty-four Hispanic voting members in Congress. LULAC believes that the Hispanic electorate has begun to develop a political consciousness and should strive to elect a number of Hispanic candidates proportional to our population at national, state, and local levels. We should not depend on any laws to require proportional representation, but rather, we must register and vote to realize this goal.

While the 1980's have been heralded as the "Decade of the Hispanic", there is little evidence that this claim is being realized. We continue to suffer major educational and economic difficulties which hold back the majority of our community from being integrated into mainstream U.S. society, difficulties for which we must find a solution. New challenges confront us, challenges which we must address immediately as a community. Our success in meeting these challenges will, undoubtedly, prove to be of paramount importance to the future development of this nation.

Source: **The Hispanic Electorates**, by Robert R. Brischetto, Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project, 1984.

HISPANICS IN THE 1984 ELECTIONS

With 525 electoral votes to 13, President Ronald Reagan won the 1984 presidential elections against his Democratic opponent Walter Mondale in a landslide victory. President Reagan captured 53,355,081 or 59 percent of the votes, while 36,884,702 or 41 percent of the votes went to Mondale. By any standard, President Reagan commanded a breathtaking electoral sweep in 1984.

Voter surveys conducted by the Washington Post, ABC, Newsweek, and other national media indicated that more than forty percent of all Hispanics had voted for the Republican ticket. The Spanish International Network (SIN) voter survey reflected the same statistic. However, we found these voter surveys to have serious shortcomings due to problems in methodology and small sample sizes. In most cases, only 300 to 500 Hispanics were sampled. In the case of SIN, they interviewed a disproportionate number of Hispanic voters in the Southeast, a region where only five percent of the total Hispanic population resides. The results, therefore, were distorted, and hardly representative of the Hispanic community voting profile nationwide.

These surveys were used predominantly for partisan purposes to underscore growing Hispanic support for the Republican party. There is little doubt that in fact support of Hispanics for President Reagan has increased from 1980. However, it would be difficult to accurately proclaim that close to forty percent of Hispanics voted for the Republican ticket based on the above Hispanic voter surveys.

The Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project (SVREP) and the Midwest Voter Registration and Education Project (MFREP) conducted the most extensive Hispanic Voter Surveys, not only with regards to Presidential preference, but also on several national issues of concern to our community. It is important to emphasize that these surveys are the most extensive and elaborate ever conducted of the Hispanic voter.

The Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project polled 2,106 Mexican Americans in 50 precincts throughout the state of Texas. It showed that 73 percent of Mexican-Americans voted for Mondale and 27 percent voted for President Reagan. According to a similar study done in 1980 by the SVREP, 70 percent of Hispanics voted for the Democratic ticket, 25 percent voted for the Republican ticket, and 5 percent for a third ticket (i.e. Anderson). Thus, the number of Hispanics who voted for Reagan increased only 2 percent between 1980 and 1984.

On the other hand, according to a survey conducted by the Midwest Voter Registration and Education Project (MVREP), which polled 1262 Hispanics in the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, and

Wisconsin; 78.2 percent of Hispanics voted for Walter Mondale and 21.8 percent voted for Ronald Reagan. Thus, this survey showed that an even smaller percentage of Hispanics voted Republican in the 1984 Presidential elections than in the 1980 elections.

Both of these surveys showed an increase in the size and participation level of the Hispanic electorate. The increase in the number of Mexican-American voters is substantiated by an SVREP poll of 238 precincts in Texas, which showed that 19 percent of Mexican Americans voted for the first time in 1984. In comparison, only 15 percent of Anglos voted for the first time.

The MVREP in their study also concluded that a large percentage of Hispanics—26 percent—voted for the first time. Furthermore, the SVREP survey concluded that Mexican American voter participation was up 22 percent over 1980, while non-Mexican American voter participation increased only 18 percent. These facts can be attributed to both the increase in the number of voting age Mexican-Americans and the success of voter registration projects such as the SVREP, MVREP, and the National Puerto Rican/Hispanic Voter Registration and Education Project (NPRHVREP) in registering Hispanic voters. Though it is true that the turnout rate of registered Mexican-Americans decreased from 52 to 49 percent, both the size and the proportion of the Hispanic electorate to the general electorate increased.

The MVREP and SVREP surveys also highlighted differences in the presidential preferences of the different ethnic, socioeconomic, and age groups that comprise the Hispanic community. For example, the MVREP survey assessed the voting patterns of Mexican-Americans; Puerto Ricans; and Cuban/Central American/South American Hispanics, as shown below.

PRESIDENTIAL PREFERENCE BY ETHNIC GROUP

	Mexican American	Puerto Rican	Cuban/Central-South American
Walter Monday	82.1%	76.3%	56.7%
Ronald Reagan	17.9%	23.7%	43.3%

The SVREP survey demonstrated, as shown below, a direct relationship between increased family income/education and support for President Reagan in the 1984 elections. The percent the specific subgroup represents of the total number of Hispanics surveyed is indicated by the symbol grp %.

VOTE FOR PRESIDENT BY EDUCATION

	Mexican Americans			Anglos		
Education	**Mondale**	**Reagan**	**Grp%**	**Mondale**	**Reagan**	**Grp%**
0-11 Years	83	16	29	64	36	7
High School	75	25	28	32	68	23
Some College	64	36	28	24	75	40
College Grad.	68	31	10	28	72	17
Grad. Studies	66	34	5	34	65	13

VOTE FOR PRESIDENT BY INCOME

Mexican Americans Family Income	Mondale	Reagan	Grp%	Anglos Mondale	Reagan	Grp%
Less than $5000	84	16	20	40	60	6
$5000-9,999	78	22	18	51	49	10
$10,000-19,999	72	27	27	34	65	21
$20,000-29,000	73	27	18	24	76	23
$30,000-39,000	62	38	8	23	77	20
$40,000-49,000	57	43	5	17	83	9
$50,000 +	29	71	3	30	70	11

Source: SVREP

Lastly, the SVREP survey demonstrated a direct relationship between increased age and support for the Democratic candidate, Walter Mondale.

VOTE FOR PRESIDENT BY AGE

Mexican Americans Age Grp.	Mondale	Reagan	Grp %	Anglos Mondale	Reagan	Grp %
18-25	67	32	23	29	71	19
26-35	66	33	26	26	74	35
36-45	74	26	22	44	56	19
46-55	[illegible]	23	14	19	81	13
56-65	85	14	10	26	74	8
65 +	90	10	5	57	43	7

Source: SVREP

The surveys conducted by the SVREP and the MVREP also demonstrated that LULAC is in step with our community on the issues. For example, LULAC's opposition to employer sanctions, military aid to El Salvador, and aid to the Contras, and LULAC's support for talks with Cuba are in tune with the majority opinions of the Hispanics surveyed. The following table shows the opinions of different Hispanic ethnic groups on a number of issues of interest to our community.

	Mexico	Puerto Rican	Cuban/ Cent./S.A.	Mex-Amer.	Anglos
a. E.R.A.					
favor	72.9	69.3	48.4	75	55
oppose	12.7	16.5	33.9	11	36
Not Sure	14.4	14.2	17.7	14	9
b. Reganomics					
favor	25	31	32.8	37	74
oppose	52.5	48	45.9	43	25
Not sure	21.7	19.9	21.3	20	11
c. Defense Spending					
favor	26.3	30.5	32.8	37	64
oppose	55.9	53.7	52.5	46	33
Not sure	17.9	15.8	14.8	18	13

d. Bilingual Spending					
favor	80.2	73.9	58.1	77	39
oppose	11.0	15.0	21.0	15	48
Not Sure	8.8	11.1	21.0	8	13
e. Domestic Cuts					
favor	19.3	20.1	19.1	21	35
oppose	64.0	62.8	66.7	64	47
Not Sure	16.8	17.1	14.3	15	18
f. Aid to El Salvador					
favor	17.3	21.2	22.6	17	24
oppose	62.1	54.1	38.7	61	59
Not Sure	20.6	24.7	38.7	22	17
g. Military Aid to the Contras					
favor	17.2	20.1	17.5	15	22
oppose	60.8	54.2	47.6	62	59
Not Sure	22.0	25.8	34.9	23	19
g. Nuclear Freeze					
favor	59.0	50.4	54.0	61	60
oppose	27.0	28.2	23.8	24	30
Not Sure	14.0	21.4	22.2	15	10
i. Employer Sanction					
favor	36.4	36.8	37.1	42	66
oppose	47.5	41.6	45.2	40	30
Not Sure	16.1	21.4	17.2	18	10
j. Amnesty					
favor	62.4	46	50.0	51	35
oppose	21.4	31.9	27.4	33	52
Not Sure	16.2	21.4	22.6	16	13
k. Normalization of Relations With Cuba					
favor	33.6	31.1	40.3	34	38
oppose	38.7	40.2	30.7	38	37
Not Sure	27.8	28.7	29.0	28	25
l. Talks With Cuba					
favor	41.0	39.4	43.6	40	49
oppose	31.0	32.9	25.8	36	32
Not Sure	28.0	27.8	30.7	24	19

The 1984 Presidential election clearly demonstrates that Hispanics are open to supporting the Republican Party, as evidenced by a steady increase in the percent of Hispanics voting for Republican candidates. However, it is incorrect to contend that Hispanics are evenly split in their views towards the Republican Party and specifically towards President Ronald Reagan's domestic and foreign policies. The data provided by SVREP and MVREP are extensive and indicate major opposition to the President's policies. It appears that Hispanics continue to vote overwhelmingly Democrat, and while there is a small increase in support for President Reagan, it appears that this support is more for the President and his style than it is for his policies. Whether this trend continues or not will largely depend on the efforts the political parties undertake to appeal to Hispanic voters.

HOW LAWS ARE MADE

The Constitution delegated to Congress, composed of the House of Representatives and the Senate, has the power to make laws. Each Congress lasts for 2 years. Following is a general description of both Houses of Congress and the legislative process.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The number of representatives allotted to each state is proportional to the population of each state, with a minimum of one representative for each state. In the 98th Congress, there was an average of one representative for every 530,000 people in the United States. In all, there were 440 Members in the House, of which 435 were full voting Members. The five non-voting members of Congress represented the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa. Although they lack the authority to vote, these five Representatives are permitted to attend all House meetings, engage in debate, serve on Committees, and enjoy other Congressional perogatives.

The House of Representatives of the 98th Congress was composed of 267 Democrats and 168 Republicans. The November election of 1984 has brought about, though, a slight political realignment in the 99th Congress, with the addition of 14 Republican House seats, making the total 253 Democrats and 182 Republicans.

Representatives are elected every two years. If a Representative vacates his seat in the course of his term, a replacement can be selected only by an election. To be a Representative, a person must have been a citizen of the United States for at least seven years; be at least twenty-five years of age; and be a resident of the state in which he/she was elected.

Even though the House and Senate operate similarly, the Constitution charges the House of Representatives with particular responsibilities. For example, all bills regarding taxation must originate in the House, although the Senate may propose or concur on amendments. Secondly, in the event of a Presidential election where no candidate receives a majority of the electoral votes, the House of Representatives selects the President from among the top three presidential contenders.

The Constitution assigns specific responsibilities to the Senate also. For example, in case no presidential candidate receives a majority of the vote, the Senate is delegated the responsibility of electing the vice-president. In addition, the Senate has the unique responsibility of advising and consenting to treaties and to certain Presidential nominations.

SENATE

The Senate is composed of 100 elected Senators and the Vice-President of the United States, who presides as President of the Senate. It should be noted that the only time the Vice-President can cast a Senate vote is when there is a tie.

Each state of the union is allotted two seats in the Senate. If a Senator vacates his seat in the course of his/her term, the Governor of the respective state designates a successor until a special election can be held to select a new Senator.

The Senate of the 98th Congress was composed of 55 Republicans and 45 Democrats. However, the November, 1984 elections brought about a slight political realignment in the Senate as well, with the addition of two Democratic seats, making the total 47 Democrats and 53 Republicans.

For a person to serve as a Senator, he/she must be at least 30 years of age; have been a citizen of the U.S. for at least nine years; and a resident of the state for which he/she was chosen. Unlike a Representative, who is elected for a period of two years, a Senator is elected to office for a six-year-period.

ORIGIN OF LEGISLATION

Members of Congress may be compelled by any one of a wide variety of political motivations to introduce legislation. For example, legislators may be compelled to introduce a piece of legislation to fulfill certain promises made during the course of their electoral campaigns. After all, Representatives will seek to be accountable to the constituency which elected them in the first place, in hopes of being re-elected.

Secondly, Representatives may be willing to amend or repeal existing laws and enact new ones if they deem them to be in the best interest of their constituencies and the nation as a whole.

Legislative initiatives may also originate from the administration. The Constitution provides that the President "shall from time to time give to the Congress information on the state of the union, and recommend for consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient". Legislative proposals may emanate from executive departments of government, as well as from the President himself. It should be emphasized that Congress is not obligated by any means to approve any legislative proposal recommended by the executive.

The last players to be discussed are the lobbying groups, who have been responsible for legislative initiatives in the past. Lobbying groups are private organized groups or associations representing particular constituencies and legislative interests. They derive their political leverage from their capability to organize constituent support on behalf of their legislative interests.

FORMS OF LEGISLATION

Legislative action, whether it originates in the House or in the Senate, may take only the following forms: bill, joint resolution, or concurrent resolution.

BILLS

Most legislative proposals take the form of a bill. A review of a bill's legislative process will be provided later on in the text.

JOINT RESOLUTION

Joint Resolutions and bills are virtually the same and are used interchangeably, except when a Joint Resolution is used to promote a Constitutional amendment. If a joint resolution to amend the Constitution is to pass Congress, two-thirds of both houses must vote upon it favorably. If this occurs, the Joint Resolution is then sent directly to the General Service Administration (GSA) for submission to the states for ratification.

CONCURRENT RESOLUTIONS

Concurrent Resolutions are used to deal with matters regarding Congress' internal organization and to express an opinion about a particular issue or occurrence. One example of the former would be a decision to form a joint committee. An example of the latter would be a Concurrent Resolution congratulating a foreign president upon his election.

Concurrent Resolutions, like Joint Resolutions to amend the Constitution, are not presented to the President for his/her signature. Instead, when a Concurrent Resolution is passed by Congress, it is signed by the Clerk of the House and the Secretary of the Senate and then submitted to the Administrator of General Services for publication in a special part of the statutes at large.

Resolutions affecting the housekeeping matters of only one House are called Simple Resolutions. Like Concurrent and Joint Resolutions, these are not sent to the President for approval or veto. Rather, they are attested to by the Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate, upon adoption, and are subsequently published in the Congressional Record.

LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IN THE HOUSE

In the House of Representatives, a bill must go through a number of steps before it is presented to the full House for passage.

STEP I: INTRODUCTION

Bills can be introduced in both Houses of Congress. To introduce a bill in the House of Representatives, all that a House Member has to do is to drop the bill in the "hopper". The "hopper" is a box on the side of the clerk's desk in the House Chambers. A public bill may be sponsored by an unlimited number of Members.

STEP II: ASSIGNMENT TO THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE

The bill is numbered, printed, and sent by the Speaker of the House to the House Committee that has jurisdiction over the subject matter of the bill

The composition of the Congressional committees is determined by a combination of factors. First of all, the number of Democrats and Republicans on Committees is proportional to their numbers in the House. Thus, the majority party in the House enjoys a majority on all Committees. The decision to designate a Congressman/woman to serve on a particular Committee is made by the majority party's Steering Committee. Some of the factors considered in designating a member's committee assignments are seniority, the member's expertise on the Committee's subject matter, and the Representative's wish to serve on a particular Committee.

Chairmanship of a committee is decided primarily by the party caucuses. Seniority and political objectives are important considerations in the selection of a Committee Chairman.

Presently, there are twenty-two standing (i.e. permanent, not ad-hoc) committees in the House and 15 in the Senate. Each Committee is further divided into subcommittees which deal with more specific legislative concerns within the full Committee's general area of jurisdiction.

In addition to the full Committees, there are several Select Committees. Select Committees do not normally consider pending legislation. Rather, they are generally responsible for investigating a particular issue. Examples of Select cmmittees in the Senate are the Select Committees on Ethics, Indian Affairs, and Intelligence.

STEP III: COMMITTEE ACTION

Once the chair of a committee receives a bill, he/she must refer it to the appropriate subcommittee unless a majority of the Committee's members vote to consider it in the full Committee.

Committees and/or Subcommittees meet on fixed meeting days or at the

request of the Chairman or the majority of the Members of the Committee. Also, in order to obtain facts and opinions on a bill, Committees and Subcommittees may schedule public hearings where parties who are interested in and knowledgeable about the subject matter are allowed to state their views on the proposed bill. It should be noted that both majority and minority party members are given the opportunity to call their own witnesses to testify during the course of these public hearings.

After reviewing a bill and listening to the public's view, a Committee/Subcommittee may approve a bill by giving it a majority vote. Otherwise, a bill may be allowed to die if the Committee takes no action or votes the bill down. It should be noted that in order for a Committee to act on a piece of legislation, a majority (quorum) of the Members of that Committee must be present. Each Member's voting record on bills, motions, or propositions — in Committees and in the full House — is available for public scrutiny.

In the event a bill is not acted upon or is voted down by the Committee, the only way for the House to withdraw a bill from a Committee is by the passage of a discharge motion. This motion demands the support of two-thirds of the Members of the House on the House floor at the time of the vote. If a bill is discharged from a Committee, it is either taken up by the full House by unanimous consent, placed on the House calendar, or referred to another Committee. The session where this decision is made is called the mark-up session.

HOUSE VOTE

If a bill is approved by a Committee, it is then scheduled on either of the four House calendars (Union, House, Consent, or Private), depending on the nature of the bill. The procedure for deliberations on a bill in the full House is determined by the House Rules Committee.

When all Representatives have had ample time to read the Committee reports, and the House Rules Committee has determined the rules for deliberation, the bill is brought to the house floor and is debated, sometimes amended, and voted upon.

If the bill does not receive the majority of the votes in the House of Representatives, it dies. On the other hand, if the bill receives the majority of the House Members' votes, given a quorum is present, it is sent to the Senate for concurrence.

LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IN THE SENATE

A Senator may introduce a bill by presenting it to the desk of the Clerk of the Presiding Officer or by introducing it directly from the floor. In the former case, the Presiding Officer of the Senate, after receiving the bill, submits it to the standing committee of the Senate that he/she deems to have jurisdiction over the bill's subject matter. It should be noted that the Senate can, by majority vote, overrule the Presiding Officer's judgement and refer a bill to a different Committee.

SENATE COMMITTEES

When examining this stage of the legislative process, one should keep in mind that the Senate Rules Committee determines the rules for the deliberation process of the Senate Committees. Only a two-thirds vote of the Senate can change the rules of Committee deliberation set by the Senate Rules Committee. The second fact that should be highlighted is that Committees must meet on scheduled meeting days unless other meeting times are set at the request of the chairman or the majority of the Committee's members.

Upon receiving a bill, a Committee may refer it to one of its Subcommittees. Senate Committees and Subcommittees, like their counterparts in the House, generally hold hearings to assess the opinions of interested parties. After considering the opinion of the public, Committees/Subcommittees prepare reports recommending either approval or rejection of the legislation. When a subcommittee makes a report to a full Committee, the full Committee must choose between adopting the reports without change, amending them, or rejecting them. A Committee may even write and adopt an entirely different report to submit before the full Senate. In the event a full Committee chooses not to act on a bill, or to reject it, the only way to discharge a bill from a Committee is by the unanimous passage of a motion in the full Senate to discharge it. If the motion to discharge is passed, the bill is withdrawn from the Committee and placed on the Senate calendar, dealt with immediately by unanimous consent, or sent to another committee.

After the report on a bill has been presented to the full Senate by a Member of the Committee which considered the bill, the bill is either placed on the Senate calendar or considered immediately by unanimous consent. The Senate has only one calendar of business, unlike the House, which has a number of calendars. If no legislation is brought to the Senate immediately by unanimous consent, the Senate begins deliberations on legislation in the order scheduled on the legislative calendar.

When bills reach the Senate floor for debate, the Senate Rules Committee and the Senate as a whole determine rules for deliberations. Rules can be set up in order to deal expeditiously with controversial issues. For example, if a motion for cloture passes by a three-fifths vote of the Senate, the time for debate is limited to one hour per person. Such measures are taken by the Senate in order to avoid a filibuster — a Senator intentionally speaking at length before the Senate in order to delay action on a piece of legislation. It should be noted that when the full Senate is operating under a unanimous consent agreement or in cloture, amendments to bills must be pertinent to the subject matter of the legislation. When the full Senate is not operating under cloture or unanimous consent, amendments need not be germane, ex-

cept when general appropriations bills are under consideration.

After all amendments by the Committee and by individual Senators have been made, the bill is read by title or in full, if requested by a Senator, and presented before the full Senate For passage. At this point a bill can either be passed by a majority vote; assigned to a different Committee; displaced by taking up another bill on the agenda, if this action is approved by a majority vote; or simply voted down.

When a bill is approved by the Senate, it is sent to the House of Representatives for concurrence. In the event that a similar bill has been reported by a House Committee, the Speaker of the House holds on to the Senate bill with the expectation that the Senate bill can be substituted for the House bill when a consideration of the latter for the House takes place. On the other hand, when the House bill differs from the Senate bill, the Speaker of the House, upon receiving a Senate bill, refers it to the appropriate subcommittee. At this stage, the House legislative cycle works on the Senate bill in the same fashion as it does on a House bill.

If a Senate bill is taken up by the House, amended, approved, and returned to the Senate, the Senate may then consider the amendments separately or in bloc if either of these options is approved by unanimous consent. If neither of these options is approved, a Senator may make a motion to either refer the amendments to a standing Committee of the Senate; amend the amendments; agree to the amendments; or recommend that a conference to decide on this matter take place between Senate and House Conferees.

CONFERENCE

When the House and Senate versions of a bill differ, a Conference Committee is set up in order to resolve these differences. The Conference Committee is composed of Members of the House selected by the Speaker of the House and by Members of the Senate selected by the Senate Majority Leader. It should be noted that the Conferees are allowed to consider only those points of each bill that conflict with the other version.

If compromise versions of both bills are attained, the compromise bills are sent back to both Houses for another vote. If no compromise is reached, the bill simply dies.

PRESIDENTIAL ACTION

If the House and Senate versions of the bills are the same, the bill is presented to the President for his signature or veto. If within ten days of receiving the bill the President fails to sign it, the bill becomes law automatically. If during the course of those ten days Congress adjourns, preventing the return of the bill to Congress with the President's objections, the bill does not become law. This is what is known as a pocket veto. When a President does decide to veto a bill, the Congress can override the President's veto if two-thirds of both houses of Congress vote to do so.

Sources

1. **How Laws are Made**, by Edward F. Willet, United States Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1980
2. **What You Should Know About Grass Roots Lobbying**, Channing L. Bete Co., Inc., 1983

HOW YOU CAN INFLUENCE LEGISLATION

It is the right and responsibility of every citizen to participate actively in government. Our political system allows us to influence our national political leaders through political advocacy. If you wish to exercise your privilege to educate your congressional representatives as to the interest of Hispanic Americans and advocate before them on behalf of this constituency, LULAC urges you to take the following steps:

I. IDENTIFY YOUR CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

To identify your congressional representatives, contact the local office of the League of Women Voters, the League of United Latin American Citizens, or this political manual. Other sources are the U.S. Post Office and City Hall.

II. BE WELL INFORMED

Information is power. If you aim to command the attention of your representative, it is imperative that you be well informed on the issues. The fact is that most Members of Congress are not well versed on all of the issues, either because of the complexities of the issues or because of the sheer number of issues. Also, many Members of Congress are not very aware that there is a Hispanic perspective and/or that Hispanics have specific problems, concerns, and needs due to the limited or non-existent coverage of Hispanic viewpoints by the media in many Congressional districts. Therefore, if you exhibit a thorough understanding of the issues, your congressional representative will be much more willing to listen to you.

Although it requires effort and study to acquire a working knowledge of the issues, it is well worth the trouble. Not only is it valuable to know the position of your congressperson on an issue; it is also important to understand fully all the arguments, both pro and con, regarding the issue.

There are a number of steps that can be taken to keep up with legislative developments. First, read everything you can on the issues, using books, newspapers, and periodicals as sources. For a more thorough coverage of legislative developments in Washington, we urge you to contact organizations such as LULAC, the League of Women Voters, the National Council of La Raza, the National Puerto Rican Coalition, and the legislative staff of your congressional representative. It is the responsibility of your congressional office to supply you with legislative information (bills, your representative's voting record, etc.) upon request.

Lastly, seek to know as much as you can about your Member of Congress. Information on your representative's professional and religious background, organizational membership, and Committee responsibilities

should be of use to you as you seek to influence him or her.

III. EXPRESS YOUR VIEWS

Hispanics have been hesitant in the past to present their views to their Representatives because of apprehension or because they have been unfamiliar with the legislative process. It is time for Hispanics to get involved. Unless we make ourselves visible, we will continue to be ignored politically in this country.

It is the responsibility of Members of Congress to represent the views of their constituencies. If they fail to do so, they may not be re-elected. Thus, you have the right and the responsibility to make yourself heard. To have access to and influence over your Congressperson, we advise you to do the following:

- Make an appointment with your representative, either in Washington or in your local district. The local and Washington addresses of your representatives are provided in this manual. Be firm in your request to meet with your representative, but not pushy. Sometimes it is best to develop a strong working relationship with staff before establishing a relationship with the Member. Even if it is not possible to meet with a Representative, it is valuable to meet with a staff member. Your influence on the staff member may affect the development of your representative's position on an issue.
- If you have the opportunity to meet with your representative, be on time. Be confident, brief, and firm in presenting your point of view. Have two or three issues to discuss. Be willing to listen, as well.
- If possible, before meeting with your congressperson, form coalitions. Then inform your Member of Congress that you represent the opinion of an active constituency in the district. Finally, thank your representative for taking the time to meet with you.
- Make a phone call or send a letter. It is not necessary to talk to your Congressperson for hours to make your case; a well written letter can be just as effective in presenting your views and influencing a representative's position. When writing a letter, always remember be brief, have the facts, and be direct and civil. Since up to now, Hispanics have seldom written to their Congressional representatives, well conceived letters and/or a letter campaign will attract their attention and make them more responsive to the interests of Hispanics.

IV. PROVIDE A FORUM TO MAKE YOUR CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE ACCOUNTABLE

Provide a forum in which to give your representative and the community an opportunity to air their opinions on issues of concern to the community. These public forums or Town Hall meetings, should be designed not to antagonize or embarrass a Representative, but rather to allow the community to express its concerns and advise the Representative of the views of your

constituency and the need for the Representative to support your position.

When organizing these public forums, debates, symposiums, etc., seek to provide a framework for an informed debate. For example, if you wish to have a public forum on the budget cuts and their impact on the community, invite groups who are knowledgeable on the subject and have been impacted by the legislation to share the podium with the Representative. Work to create an atmosphere of positive and constructive exchange between your views and those of your Representative. Avoid unnecessary confrontations, but be ready to utilize this forum to make your disapproval clear to your Member when he/she has blatantly voted against your interests.

Lastly, these forums should be conducted on a recurring basis, perhaps one every three months, and not just at election time.

V. FORM COALITIONS WITH GROUPS THAT HAVE SIMILAR INTERESTS

Sometimes the most effective way to present your views to your representative is in coalition with others. As Hispanic political influence develops, we must be open and willing to work with other groups who share our concerns. Because Hispanics have not yet attained the visibility that other groups may have, it is often advantageous to form coalitions with groups who do have the attention of your Representative.

However, keep in mind that when forming coalitions, there must be a clear understanding as to which positions are common to all members of the coalition. Coalitions must be built on a foundation of principal and openness; communication between the various groups must be constant.

Coalitions are very effective, for they reflect the broad-based support of various minority or interest groups for a specific issue. Coalitions expand your base of support and present a more unified front to your Representative. More often than not, a Representative will be more responsive to the concerns presented by a coalition than by one group. Evidence for the effectiveness of coalitions can be found in the fact that elected officials often attempt to divide the various groups on certain issues in order to minimize opposition and/or support for an issue.

Coalitions also provide a forum where others may better understand your interests and you may better understand those of others. Despite the criticisms voiced by some against coalitions, they are perhaps the future trend in advocacy, for they provide the broad political pressure elected officials respond to and while establishing and improving relations between various interest groups.

VI. SURVEY YOUR COMMUNITY

To ascertain the majority opinions of your community, arrange for door to door surveys to be conducted. If a survey in your district can not be done, seek to become familiar with other surveys. Surveys on Hispanics have been conducted in the past by the Southwest Voter Registration and Education

Project (SVREP), the Midwest Voter Registration and Education Project (MVREP), the National Puerto Rican/Hispanic Voter Education and Registration Project, and other interested groups.

Door-to-door surveys can be simple and do not necessarily need to utilize a scientific methodology. In going door-to-door, you not only become better aware of the detailed concerns of the Hispanic community, but you can also utilize the effort to politically educate the community about issues which concern them but have not come to their attention. Efforts such as these provide an opportunity for outreach to politically educate the Hispanic community.

This type of survey should be done with volunteers. It should be developed as a community-wide project, utilizing English and Spanish language media, both print and radio. A questionnaire should be developed which asks very specific questions and attempts to secure the most accurate opinion. The respondents should always be given the opportunity to elaborate their answers.

Your local church could be very helpful to you as you complete your survey. Black civil rights organizations have always worked with churches in the Black community. In fact, churches in the Black community have been at the forefront of the civil rights movement. We should seek the support of the churches in the Hispanic community so that they could become involved in the defense of in the defense of the civil rights of Hispanics just as the Black churches became involved in the civil rights movement.

A positive step in this direction is to conduct opinion surveys outside community churches with the support of the parish clergy. The Catholic Church is a major focal point in the Hispanic community and thus provides a great opportunity to conduct outreach to Hispanics on issues of importance.

Again, surveys conducted here should be staffed by volunteers who are members of the local parish and should take place with the public support of the parish priest. Questionnaires should be simple and should allow for elaboration on the part of the respondent. Always provide political education material to those surveyed after they have filled out questionnaires. It is imperative that they be educated about the details of an issue and its importance to them as U.S. citizens of Hispanic decent.

Conducting these surveys should put you more in touch with the Hispanic community as well as establishing much broader and deeper support for the issues you are bringing to their attention. Use these surveys to reach out to your community, for these are efforts that we — Hispanics — are undertaking to better politically educate our community. They do not depend on any outside forces, but are initiatives we control. They build pride, knowledge, a sense of community, and the will to participate in the electoral process. They build a political consciousness, creating the awarewness that our participation in the political process can make a difference individually or collectively.

Perhaps more importantly, efforts undertaken to politically educate our community are the first step in deciding our own destiny. Nothing is more feared in the political arena than an intelligent and knowledgeable voter. It is not only important to vote, but also to cast and intelligent and well-informed vote.

VII. VOTE

Lastly, exercise your right to vote. Learn the candidate's position on the issues, register, and vote. The Hispanic community can exert more political leverage in this country if we make the electoral system work for us. Our vote does make a difference. Let's use it.

The end goal of these efforts to politically educate the Hispanic community is to ensure that Hispanics register and **vote**. Our voting has and will make a difference in determining our future as a community, and whether we as U.S. citizens will or will not be treated equally and offered equal opportunity. Only we can really make the difference by voting.

Sources

1. **What You Should Know About Grassroots Lobbying**, by Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.
2. **A Voter Education Manual**, by National Urban League
3. **Lobbying Handbook**, American Civil Liberties Union (1984)

HISPANIC VOTER REGISTRATION PROJECT MANUAL

INTRODUCTION

The development and implementation of a Hispanic Voter Registration drive is not an easy task. It demands a great deal of work and determination. Nevertheless, the benefits that a successful voter registration campaign can bring to our community are enormous. Following is a manual that LULAC hopes will be of use to you in your effort to develop and implement a successful voter registration drive.

I. BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

1. Define Objectives

The target area of a voter registration drive should be clearly defined, i.e. whether to register Hispanics in a particular electoral district, city neighborhood, etc. Once you have defined the objective of your voter registration drive, a realistic assessment of the value of the successful completion of such a campaign should be made. For example, if your target population is small, it is misleading and may even be counterproductive to exaggerate the political, economic, and social impact that your registration campaign can have.

2. Nonpartisan Status

Keep in mind that a registration campaign should be nonpartisan. Your goal is to register and motivate Hispanics to vote — not to guide our community to vote for one party and not for another. You will find that a nonpartisan status will also be of use to you when you seek funding from groups interested in increasing the political influence of U.S. Hispanics.

II. PLANNING A VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

1. Assess Present Status of Target Group

Assess the present electoral status of your target group. If your objective, for example, is to register as many Hispanics as possible in a particular electoral district, find out how many Hispanics are in that electoral district, how many of them are eligible to register, and how many have already registered. Your local election officials or the Bureau of the Census can provide you with that information.

Once an estimate is made of how many Hispanic people are unregistered in a particular district, a realistic goal for the number of Hispanics you wish to register can be set. In setting these goals, remember that they must be realistic and must take into consideration your resources. Other factors

beyond your control which have impeded our community's full electoral participation in the past, such as lack of trust in the electoral system, must also be kept in mind when setting goals.

2. Learn State and Local Voting Procedures and Laws

It goes without saying that prior to developing a plan of action, to register your target group, you must first do some research on your state's voting procedures and electoral laws. Ascertain, for example, the following:

- *Eligibility requirements for registration
- *The registration process
- *Where to register
- *Special election statutes (e.g. absentee voting)

Part of this information has been provided in this Voter Registration Booklet. For further information on the election laws of your state, contact the Election Bureau of the Secretary of State. The different party offices in your state should also have this information.

3. Visit Local Officials and Ask How the State's Electoral Laws are Administered

It is very important to establish cordial relations with the election officials in your target area. Such a relationship should not be difficult to establish, since both your organization and electoral officials share a mutual interest in having Hispanics register and vote.

When meeting with electoral officials, state the objectives of your organization. Make sure to mention that your organization is non-partisan and that you wish to establish a constructive working relationship. Ask for clarification on how the electoral laws work, and find out what can and can not be done in registering Hispanics. Also solicit from them the necessary basic information (e.g. addresses of registration centers, etc.) needed in the course of your registration drive.

4. Develop a Plan of Action

Now that you have done your research on the electoral status of your target community and on the electoral laws of your state or county, you can begin to develop a plan of action for your registration campaign. It may be a good idea at this point to contact other voter registration groups, such as the Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project, the Midwest Voter Registration and Education Project, and the National Hispanic/Puerto Rican Voter Registration Project to get their advice on what plan of action to follow. Their experience and willingness to work with groups such as yours will undoubtedly be helpful.

Once a plan of action is developed, you should have a clearer idea of the resources needed to carry out your objectives. Following are some recommendations on where to look for resources for your project.

III. ORGANIZATION OF RESOURCES

1. Organization of External Resources

To organize a successful registration drive, you will need material resources such as meeting facilities, volunteers, funds, publicity etc. Don't despair. These resources are within your reach, if you are apt in convincing those about you of the value of your project.

There are many potential allies right around you. In the past Hispanic churches have proven willing to cooperate with efforts such as yours, if they are approached properly. Churches are good sources for volunteers, meeting facilities, and publicity. Learn to tap this important community resource.

Another potential ally in your community is the business community. Many Hispanic businesses would be more than willing to contribute funds and other resources to your organization. They too share an interest in the political, social, and economic development of our community.

Local organizations and community leaders could also be helpful in your efforts to develop the resources of your organization. Local organizations, such as your local LULAC chapter, have been of service in the past in providing volunteers, community contacts, and organizational experience.

In some circumstances, it may require organizational efforts such as yours to unify Hispanic organizations so that they may work in concert on behalf of our community. We need unity, and your efforts could be exactly what is required to bring this needed unity about.

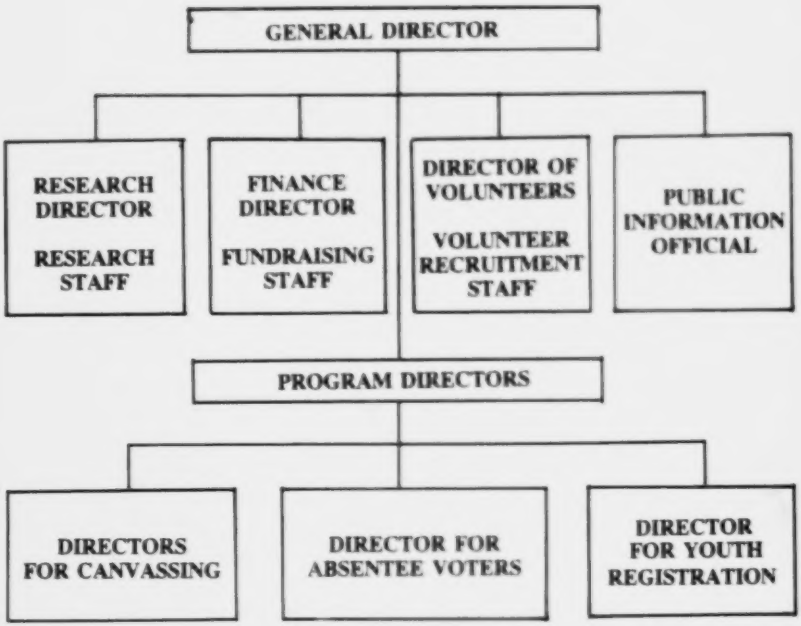
Community leaders can also aid you in your efforts by bestowing credibility to your work. Remember, though, to be mindful of the political dynamics of your community in soliciting the support of community leaders. Lamentably, there is still too much conflict among the leadership of our community. Be careful not to exacerbate it. Remember, you are running a non-partisan campaign. The key word is **unity**.

2. Organization of Internal Resources

A. Organizational Structure:

Now that you have obtained the support of religious, business, and civic institutions in your target area, you have to organize and train the people who will work on your registration drive. Since the organizational structure you will develop is dependent on these people, it is important to assess your resources realistically. You want to make the best use of what is available to you.

It is of paramount importance that an orderly and well-defined organizational structure be established. Shown below is a sample organizational structure that has proven to be successful in other community voter registration initiatives.



Urban Institute Booklet

The organizational structure of your project will depend on your objectives and the resources available to you. However, it is important to make everyone accountable to the General Director of the Voter Registration Drive. In meeting your deadlines, make sure you know who is responsible for what. Avoid duplicating work and do not let people lose sense of the overall plan. It is important to develop a team feeling while at the same time maintaining clearly defined responsibilities.

In addition to developing an appropriate structure, good research, fund raising, volunteer training, and publicity are key factors in a successful voter registration campaign. Good research means that you simply need to know all that you can about the voter registration process (voter turnout, places of registration, etc.), and fundraising is essential if your group is to have funds to buy the necessary materials to carry out your campaign (phone, paper, publicity, etc.)

Successful recruitment and training of volunteers and good publicity are also essential. Volunteers need to be trained in five key areas. For one, volunteers need to know how to keep the message simple. They must present the need for the registration of our community in a way that all potential voters can understand. The message must pertain to the "bread and butter" issues which affect the daily lives of our community.

Secondly, it is important that volunteers speak the language of those they are trying to register. A large proportion of our population does not speak English, and your volunteers must adapt accordingly. Thus, when pairing volunteers to do canvassing, make sure that at least one person speaks Spanish.

Third, volunteers must be prepared to refute excuses for not registering. Many Hispanics have a cynical or indifferent attitude towards participation in our electoral system. They need to be convinced of the value of organizing and voting. Your volunteers are the ones to go and accomplish this difficult task. Thus, make sure they are equipped to handle these rationalizations cordially and convincingly.

Fourth, your volunteers need to be trained to identify those who may face additional obstacles to electoral participation. A limited educational background or a handicap may make the act of registering and voting an intimidating one. Your volunteers need to know how to assist those of limited educational background by demystifying the electoral process. This can be done through the use of sample ballots and other illustrations. Additionally, transportation should be provided for the handicapped. It is very important that this politically marginalized sector of our community be convinced and organized. Your volunteers are the key to accomplishing this task.

Lastly, if you have targeted a particular Hispanic sub-group (young people, women, etc.) your volunteers need to be trained to deal with this group's special registration needs. For example, if you seek to register 18-24 year-olds, you need volunteers who will be comfortable in a high school or college setting and who are capable of establishing a rapport with those

young people they seek to register.

Because the successful training of your volunteers is essential to a successful campaign, be thorough, but remember that they are volunteers. Be prepard to give them the moral and emotional support that they need.

Media Outreach

The support of the media is crucial to a successful voter registration drive. Therefore, it is extremely important that you establish a good working relationship with people in the media by presenting yourself in a cordial and professional manner.

The first sources to tap are the Spanish language radio and television stations, since they are major sources of information for Hispanics. Use your community leaders and others who have worked with the media to contact the community relations people at these stations. When you meet with them, inform them of the purpose of a non-partisan voter registration/education drive. Be confident — Hispanic radio and television stations in the past have been quite willing to work with groups such as yours.

Among other things, you may request 30-second public service announcements, appearances on talk shows, news releases, or general publicity. Also, ask them to recommend other ways to publicize your campaign. Finally, remember to thank them for their cooperation.

If you wish to establish a similar working relationship with the English language media, be a little more cautious and patient, since they are not as familiar with your constituency as are the Spanish language media.

To tap the press, issue press releases, sponsor news conferences, and release public service announcements. Also, develop a cordial relationship with newspaper editors by meeting with them and explaining the purpose of your campaign.

Lastly, make use of the institutional allies in your community. Seek to have your campaign publicized by churches, civic organizations, and schools. Take time to speak to audiences in these institutions. We assure you that your efforts will be amply rewarded.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGISTRATION DRIVE

You have done the necessary research. A plan of action to register your target group has been developed. Your human resources have been organized and trained. The funds are there and your campaign is being publicized. It is time to go out there and register people.

In implementing your plan of action, keep the following recommendations in mind:

1. Develop a Timetable

A flexible timetable should be of value in making goals and deadlines clear, keeping track of the progress of your campaign, and avoiding confusion.

2. Motivate Those Registered to Vote

Remember that you are registering people to vote. Tell them, when you register them, when the elections will take place. Remind people, a second time, to vote by calling them or sending letters shortly before the elections. If those you have registered need transportation or child care facilities, make arrangements to meet those needs on election day. Do what you have to do to get our community to exercise their right to vote.

3. Arrange Voter Education Activities

If possible, get the candidates to participate in non-partisan forums, debates, etc. so as to make their positions known to our community. Also, arrange for speakers to talk about citizenship education. It is not enough that our community has registered; our community also needs to be informed about the positions of all the candidates. The practice of informing the community should continue after the elections take place to make elected officials accountable to our community.

V. EVALUATION

Now that you have finished your registration campaign and the election is over, take some time to evaluate the success of your campaign. Find out, for example, how many Hispanics registered and voted in this election in comparison to a similar election in the past. Did you meet your voter registration target?

It may also be helpful to meet with your staff and those groups who worked with you to assess the work of the drive. Figure out what was not done or what could have been done better. Maybe you can write a local voter education/registration project manual which could be of value to other groups in your community interested in developing and implementing a voter registration drive in the future.

Lastly, get ready for the next voter registration drive. There are many more elections to come.

Sources

1. **Voter Education Manual,** National Urban League, Washington, D.C., 1983
2. **Field Coordinator's Manual,** by Southwest Voter Registration Education Project, San Antonio, Texas.